

A READING FROM THE KATHA UPANISHAD

What is here, is there;
 what is there is likewise here.
 Those who see as though there were difference here
 wander from death to death.

It can only be grasped by the mind.
 There is no diversity here whatsoever.
 Those who see as though there were diversity here,
 wander from death to death.

The *purusa*, the size of the thumb,
 resides in the body.
 Knowing that one as the ruler of the past and future,
 one does not shrink away from it.
 This is indeed that!

The *purusa*, the size of the thumb,
 is like a light without smoke,
 the ruler of the past and the future,
 the same today and tomorrow.
 This indeed it that!

Like rain on a mountain ridge runs down the slope,
 one who sees *dharmas* as separate runs away after them.
 As pure water poured into pure water becomes truly the same,
 so does the self of the silent one who understands.

(4:10-15)

A READING FROM THE BHAGAVAD GITA

For those whose ignorance has been destroyed by true knowledge of God,
 that wisdom, shining like the sun, reveals the Supreme.
 Those whose mind and intellect are wholly merged in God,
 who remain constantly established in identity with God,
 and have finally become one with God,
 their sins being wiped out by wisdom,
 reach the supreme goal whence there is no return.

Whether it be a priest¹ endowed with learning and culture,
 a cow, an elephant, a dog or a pariah,
 the wise look with equanimity on all.
 That knower of Brahman with reason firm and free from doubt,

¹ Skt. *Brahmin*.

who rejoices not on obtaining what is pleasant
and does not feel perturbed on meeting with the unpleasant,
lives eternally in identity with Brahman.

Those whose minds remain unattached to sense-objects
derive through meditation the *sattvik*² joy which dwells in the mind.
The soul bound to Brahman through meditation enjoys eternal bliss.

Truly the pleasures born of sense-contacts
are nothing but a source of suffering.
They come and they go, transient;
for this reason the wise do not indulge in them.

Only they are true yogis
who are able to withstand the urges of lust and anger
in this very life before casting off the body.
Only they are truly happy.

(5:16-18, 20-23)

12.3

A READING FROM THE TAO TE CHING

The five colors can blind the eyes.
The five tones can deafen the ears.
The five flavors can dull the palate.

Riding and hunting drive us crazy;
the craving for things leads to wrongs.

Thus the sage nourishes the belly,
not merely the eye,
choosing one, not the other.

(#12)

12.4

A READING FROM THE DHAMMAPADA

Few cross over to the further shore.
Most merely run back and forth along the side of the stream.
Only those who follow the well-expounded teaching
can cross to the further shore,
beyond the grasp of passions, so hard to overcome.

Let the wise shun the cauldron of confusion,
and proceed on the bright path.

² *sattvik*=the quality (*guna*) of luminosity.

Let them leave the comfort of home,
forsaking sensual pleasures.
Let them free themselves from all obstacles,
delighting in seclusion (not an ordinary choice),
and devote themselves to cleansing the blemishes of the mind.

Those who have carefully cultivated their minds,
perfected in the elements of enlightenment,
who, without grasping, delight in detachment,
cleansed of all corruption and so shining brightly,
send forth a brilliant light.

(6:10-14)

12.5

A READING FROM THE SUTTA-NIPATA

A person of wisdom should be truthful, without arrogance, without deceit, not slanderous and not hateful. The wise person should go beyond the evil of greed and miserliness.

To have your mind set on calmness, you must take power over sleepiness, drowsiness and lethargy. There is no place for laziness and no recourse to pride.

Do not be led into lying, do not be attached to forms. You must see through all pride and fare along without violence.

Do not get excited by what is old, do not be contented with what is new. Do not grieve for what is lost or be controlled by desire.³

12.6

A READING FROM THE FIRST BOOK OF KINGS

Then the word of the Lord came to Elijah saying, "Go out and stand on the mountain before the Lord, for the Lord is about to pass by." Now there was a great wind, so strong that it was splitting mountains and breaking rocks in pieces before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a sound of sheer silence. When Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his mantle and went out and stood at the entrance to the cave.

(1 Kgs 19:11-13a)

³ Trans. H. Saddhatissa in *Teachings*, 3.

12.7

A READING FROM THE JEWISH MIDRASH

*The spirit of a human being is the lamp of the Lord.*⁴ The Holy One said, Let My Lamp be in your hand, and your lamp will be in My hand. What is the Holy One's lamp? The Torah, of which it is said, *The commandment is a lamp, and Torah is light.*⁵ What is implied by *Thy commandment is a lamp*? The people who perform a commandment are accounted as if they had kindled a lamp before the Holy One, and thereby they quicken their own spirit, which is called a "lamp," as in the verse, *The spirit of a human being is the lamp of the Lord.*

(*Exodus Rabbah* 36:3)⁶

12.8

A READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW

And Jesus said, 'In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

'Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will know them by their fruits.

(7:12-20)

12.9

FROM THE WRITINGS OF SAINT CYRIL OF ALEXANDRIA

Those who have a sure hope, guaranteed by the Spirit, that they will rise again lay hold of what lies in the future as though it were already present. They say: Outward appearances will no longer be our standard in judging others. Our lives are all controlled by the Spirit now, and are not confined to this physical world that is subject to corruption. The light of the Only-begotten has shone on us, and we have been transformed into the Word, the source of all life.

(*Cap. 5:5-6*)⁷

⁴ Prov 20:27.

⁵ Prov 6:23.

⁶ In *A Book of Life*, 156.

⁷ From the Commentary on the second letter to the Corinthians, *Office of Readings*, 601-602.

12.10

FROM THE HADITH OF THE PROPHET MUHAMMAD

The Prophet said, "No one is born except according to intrinsic nature, but their parents make them Jews, or Christians, or Magians, just as a cow gives birth to a calf that is whole; do you find it mutilated?"

Then Abu Huraira said, quoting the Qur'an, "The intrinsic nature from God is that according to which God made humankind. There is no changing the creation of God; that is the true religion."⁸

12.11

FROM THE POEMS OF RUMI

what is this fragrance?
is it from heaven?
whose laughter is this?
is it Houris⁹ in paradise?

what wedding is this
with a moon for a platter
and heaven for a veil?

what banquet is this
that the Sultan of Baghdad
licks the platter
in our kitchen?

God alone knows!

but come! Take a pick-axe
and break apart
your stony self

the heart's matrix
is gluttoned with rubies
springs of laughter
are buried in your breast

unstop the wine-jar,
batter down the door
to the treasury of non-existence

that water in your jug
is brackish and low
smash the jug
and come to the river!¹⁰

⁸ Trans. Thomas Cleary, in *The Wisdom of the Prophet*, 6.

⁹ Beautiful young girls who live in Paradise.

FROM THE PRAYERS OF THE SIKHS

I would bathe in the holy rivers
if so I could win God's love and grace.
But of what use is pilgrimage
if it does not please him that way?

What creature obtains anything here
except through previous good acts?
Yet hearken to the Word of the Guru
and the the Guru's counsel within your spirit
shall shine like a precious stone.

The Guru's divine illumination
has unraveled one mystery;
there is but one Bestower of life:
may I never forget that one.

(Morning Prayer #6)

¹⁰ Trans. Daniel Liebert in *Collection*, 13.